

Private Agency Staff Update

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide an update on Health PEI's use of Travel Licensed Practical Nurses (TLPNs), Travel Residential Care Workers (TRCWs) and Travel Patient Care Workers (TPCWs).

Background: UPSE filed two policy grievances in response to concerns from members about agency staff:

1. TLPNs – December 15, 2022
2. TRCWs – September 18, 2025

TLPN Arbitration Decision: The TLPN arbitration took place last year. On June 25, 2026, arbitrator Frank Demont, KC, issued his decision (the "Award") and upheld the grievance. The Award included several remedies, including:

- Repayment of union dues for all hours worked by TLPNs.
- An order for Health PEI to stop using travel agency LPNs to perform work in the UPSE bargaining unit, effective 13 weeks after the Award, or September 25, 2026.

It is important to note that the Award applied only to TLPNs in long-term care facilities.

Discussions with Health PEI: After the decision, Health PEI contacted the Union to discuss concerns about how to implement the Award. The Union also heard from members who worried about the impact of abruptly removing agency staff during a staffing shortage. Health PEI had come to rely on agency staff and had integrated them into its daily operations. UPSE President Karen Jackson and Health PEI CEO Laurae Kloschinsky then held discussions to find a solution that addressed both parties' concerns.

Agreement: The discussions resulted in an agreement between the Union and Health PEI. Under the agreement:

- The Union agreed to extend the cease-and-desist deadline to March 31, 2027, to give Health PEI time to transition away from agency staff.
- The Union agreed to withdraw its TRCW grievance.
- Health PEI agreed to stop using travel LPNs, RCWs and PCWs to perform work in the UPSE bargaining unit by March 31, 2027.
- Health PEI agreed to repay the Union for dues for every shift worked by a TLPN, TRCW and TPCW, starting from the date Health PEI first used each classification of agency staff.

Why This Agreement Matters: The Union believes that extending the cease-and-desist deadline is in the best interest of our members, resolves ongoing disputes with the Employer, assists with possible adverse effects on public services for Islanders, and helps strengthen labour relations with Health PEI. Also, this is a significant step in challenging the privatization of public services and reducing costs for PEI taxpayers.

Karen Jackson, UPSE President, said that “UPSE is pleased to have reached an agreement with Health PEI through collaborative discussions with Interim Chief Executive Officer Laurae Kloschinsky. This agreement addresses our members’ concerns, provides a clear timeline for the employer to transition away from private agency staff, and strengthens our commitment to protecting public services. It is an important step toward reducing costly privatization, supporting our members, and ensuring public dollars are invested in public health care.”